(a) whether in view of recession and decline in foreign investment, Government has approached World Bank to double India's loan entitlement;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present position of borrowing of loans by Government from foreign agencies;

(d) the interest to be paid by Government on such borrowings; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to make payments of the principal loan amounts?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) To mitigate the challenges arising out of the global financial crisis, the Government of India has expressed to the World Bank, its willingness to avail of additional loan assistance of US $5.2 billion over two years, *i.e.*, upto June, 2010. This will be over and above the average IBRD loan assistance of around US $1.5-2.0 billion per year. The following four projects have been posed to the World Bank for additional financing:—

(i) Recapitalization of Public Sector Banks and National Housing Bank— US $3.4 billion;

(ii) Power Grid Corporation of India Limited— US $1.0 billion;

(iii) India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited— US $0.6 billion; and

(iv) Small and Medium Enterprises Financing and Development Project (SIDBI)— US $0.2 billion.

(c) and (d) As on 31.01.2009, the total amount of loans borrowed by Government from foreign Governments, which is routed through Government Budget, is Rs. 256575.34 crore.

Interest payable by Government on such borrowings (including commitment charges) is Rs. 4313.37 crore as projected in Budget Estimates (BE) 2009-10.

(e) Adequate provisions are made in the Budget for the repayment of Principal Loan as well as interest as per loan agreement to make payments as per agreed schedule.

Ganga Action Plan

*156. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that more than 1.4 billion litres of untreated affluent is flowing into Ganga river daily and at a number of places the quality of water is worse than when the Ganga Action Plan was initiated on which Rs. 1500 crore has been spent, which has gone down the drain;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has chalked out any time bound plan for cleaning Ganga river; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) Untreated waste water is one of the major sources of pollution of river Ganga. The Ganga Action Plan (GAP) Phase I, was taken up in the year 1985 to treat partial pollution load of the river as a centrally funded scheme. Under the Plan, 260 pollution abatement schemes spread over 25 towns in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal were completed at an expenditure of Rs. 452 crore. The pollution abatement schemes include interception and diversion of sewage for treatment in sewage treatment plants; low cost sanitation works; electric and/or improved wood crematoria; river front development works; public participation and awareness programmes etc. GAP Phase-I was declared closed in March, 2000. Since GAP Phase-I did not cover the pollution load of Ganga fully, GAP Phase II which included Plans for Yamuna, Gomti, Damodar and Mahananda besides Ganga was approved in various stages from 1993 onwards. The present sanctioned cost of works for Ganga river (main stem) under GAP Phase-II is Rs. 568.28 crore against which an amount of Rs. 385.27 crore has been released to the State Implementing Agencies. Out of a total of 311 schemes sanctioned, 185 schemes have been completed so far. Under GAP-I and II, a total sewage treatment capacity of 999 million litres per day (mld) has been created for river Ganga alone.

With the completion of the pollution abatement works under GAP Phase-I and II, water quality of Ganga has shown improvement at major locations over its pre-GAP quality in terms of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD). This is despite the phenomenal increase in the urban population leading to substantial increase in the pollution load of the river Ganga over the past years. The BOD values in the year 2008 range between 1.2 to 4.8 mg/litre in major monitoring locations as compared to BOD values ranging between 1.7 to 15.5 mg./litre in 1986. This is as per the water quality monitoring undertaken by independent reputed institutions like the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur and Indian Toxicological Research Centre (ITRC), Lucknow.

River conservation is a mammoth task requiring involvement of all the stakeholders. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments in creation of civic infrastructure for sewage management and disposal etc. by providing grant for capital works in the identified polluted stretches. There are also other Central programmes in operation under the Union Ministry of Urban Development, namely, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and the Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT), for supplementing the efforts of the State Governments and Urban Local Bodies.

Recognising the need for revamping the Ganga cleaning programme, the Government has further decided to set up a "National Ganga River Basin Authority" as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority for the river Ganga to address the problem of pollution in the Ganga in a holistic and comprehensive manner.